



Urge Congress to protect vulnerable children.

Background: Instead of going to school, playing with friends, and enjoying time with family, tens of thousands of children from Central America flee their homes embarking on a dangerous trek north to the United States. Extreme violence and the lack of opportunity at home, and the desire to reunite with parents and other family members drive these kids to make the perilous journey without a parent or guardian.

They are all under the age of 18.

The number of unaccompanied children crossing the U.S. border has increased alarmingly, doubling every year since 2011. This year alone, as many as 90,000 children could arrive, creating a humanitarian crisis in need of our attention.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, close to 60 percent are fleeing violence and have international protection claims. At the same time, 40,000 young mothers with children have also entered the U.S. and are being placed in detention centers. They will likely be exposed to expedited removal from the U.S., without the opportunity to make their case before an immigration judge.

Just this week, the Obama Administration requested additional funding (through what is referred to as a 'supplemental') from Congress for fiscal year 2014 to address these concerns.



Now is the time to raise your voice to help protect these vulnerable children and mothers!

Pope Francis has said that the children crossing our borders should be "welcomed and protected," and that we must work to promote development in their home countries to address the root causes that force them to leave.

The Catholic Church is responding to the plight of these children based on the principles of Catholic social teaching: that all people have a right to migrate, but also the right not to migrate and to meet their needs where they are.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)/Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) provides extensive child welfare and other critical services to this highly vulnerable child population. Meanwhile, Catholic Relief Services addresses the reasons why children make the perilous journey to the U.S., implementing education, leadership and work skill training programs to help these kids stay and flourish in their home communities. It also helps to revitalize economies in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala to provide more economic opportunities.

Take Action Today! Add your voice to the call to help children in need today! Contact your Senators and Representative and ask them to:

- Oppose the Obama Administration's request for "fast track" authority to speed the removal of unaccompanied children back to their countries without due process protections
- Provide adequate funding to protect unaccompanied children arriving in the U.S. and respond to their basic needs, including legal representation while their immigration case is pending;
- Address the root causes that compel children to flee their homes by providing robust funding for targeted development programs in Central America and Mexico and a comprehensive regional plan to address this issue; and,
- Enable the safe, orderly return and reintegration of children who are deported to their home communities.

To **send a pre-written, instant e-mail** to Congress, visit the [Catholics Confront Global Poverty Action Center](#).



Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at [202-225-3121](tel:202-225-3121). Ask to be connected to your Members' offices. To get direct access information for your Representative, [visit this link](#).